

THE RESPONDER

JULY



Safety Behavior	2
Ambulance Billing	3
Spot Light	3
Fireworks Press Conference	4
Promotions and Retirements	5
Run Stats	6
Hot Shots	7

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On the web!
www.alexandriava.gov/fire

Vice President Biden Visits Alexandria

Vice President Joe Biden was in town to hold a town hall-style meeting at the Durant Center on Thursday, July 16th. He explained President Obama's health-care reform plan to about 200 people, many of them senior citizens. Biden was joined by U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius, White House Director of Health and Reform Nancy Ann Deparle, and AARP CEO Barry Rand. Alexandria Medics Steve Boyer and Fiona Apple were on hand at the 1605 Cameron Street to provide a medical stand-by.

The meeting focused on health care reform, specifically on how senior citizens



VP Biden, AARP CEO Barry Rand, White House Director of Health and Reform Nancy Ann Deparle and U.S Secretary of Health and Human Services Kathleen Sebelius

will be affected. Vice President Biden not only spoke about closing the gap in coverage for Americans, but also about

bridging the gap between health care providers, physicians, businesses, and senior citizens who often depend on a fixed income and have unpredictable health problems and costs.

The town hall-style meeting was open to members of the public who received an invitation. Mayor Bill Euille, Vice Mayor Kerry Donley, Council Women Redella S. Pepper, Council Women Alicia Hughs, and Councilman Frank H. Fannon IV were also on hand to welcome the Vice President to Alexandria.



Medic Steve Boyer and Fiona Apple with Vice President Joe Biden

Safety Behavior ...Submitted by Captain Merryman

Nowadays we have come to see, hear, and talk about **Safety Culture**. Would any of you (who have tolerated me over the years) find it surprising that I have somewhat of a different take on reaching a new level of a Safety Culture? In order for all of us to grasp Safety Culture, I think we need to first take a look at our Safety Behavior.

Take a look at the pictures submitted with this article. Engine 207 and Engine 201 come across a boulder dragged into the west bound lanes of Duke Street by a tractor trailer. The Safety Behavior (of the personnel on this scene) was to don a High Visibility Traffic Vest and to block traffic to secure their safety. This was the appropriate Safety Behavior for this situation. You can also see the personnel on Engine 201, utilizing correct Safety Behavior by wearing their seatbelts. I challenge you with this question: If this same situation had happened one year ago, would we have seen the same level of commitment toward Safety Behavior? Once we have the correct Safety Behavior ingrained in our psyche and utilized each and every time, then we will have established our Safety Culture.

On the flip-side, we have personnel who must be encouraged to get their fire-fighting gear to the gear room for cleaning and maintenance. Obviously, this is Safety Behavior that we must encourage. This situation places the Shift Health & Safety Officer in the position to administer the most vital role of his or her duties: Encourage the correct Safety Behavior. We can do this by having direct contact with just one person, with one company officer, or by utilizing our chain-of-command. Please understand that it is the Shift Safety Officer's duty to make Safety Behavior a top priority.

If you do not think you play a vital role in Safety Behavior, think again, my friend. Many of you stepped forward to deliver a Safety Presentation last month during National Safety Month and Fire/EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week. I am sure that you saw inspiring pictures and read useful information posted on the Fire Portal. These presentations are



proof that **YOU** were trying to affect Safety Behavior, which will impact our Safety Culture.

Here are just a few of the topics covered during those presentations: (1) Infectious Disease Control Measures, (2) Health and Fitness, (3) Landing Zone Operations, (4) Proper Use and Lifting Techniques for the COT, Stair Chair, and Scoop Stretcher, (5) NIOSH Line of Duty Death Case Studies, (6) Proper Care of Firefighting Gear, (7) Importance of Hydration, Scene Safety, Violence in the Workplace, (8) Boating Safety, (9) Seven Components of Emergency Incident Rehabilitation, (10) Dangers of Engineered I-Beams and Engineered Trusses, (11) Body Mechanics, Back Health and Spine Health, (12) Sixteen Life Safety Initiatives, (13) Carbon Monoxide and Effects on the Human Body, (14) Station Safety, (15) How to Properly Check and Clean Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus, (16) Thirteen items that will ensure a safe Fire Ground Operation, and (17) Presentations on Highway and Roadway positioning and safety.

These were **your** topics--that **you** felt were impor-

tant and topics and that **you** wanted to share with **your** peers in order to affect Safety Behavior. In the presentations that I attended, I did not hear one word of dissatisfaction—that was a good sign. Everyone was appreciative, involved, and engaged. These actions are an important part of our foundation toward Safety Behavior and Safety Culture. I applaud all of you for your commitment toward National Safety Month and Fire/EMS Safety, Health and Survival Week.

You can call it what you please, Safety Behavior or Safety Culture, but the most important question we must ask ourselves is: Are we moving in the right direction? Ask me, and the answer is **YES**. Your presentations along with many of the pictures and information on the Fire Portal are proof that we are moving in the right direction.

Stay Safe!



Ambulance Billing Revenues are up 720% in Five Years ...submitted by Brian Hricik

Although the City finds itself in a struggling economy and tax revenues are declining, Ambulance Billing continues to bring in record-setting revenues. In fiscal year 2004, the City received \$240,000 in revenue. Just 5 years later, in fiscal year 2009, the City brought in \$1,968,197 in revenue.

A major factor for the increase in this revenue should focus on the improved documentation the field medics are providing. Over this 5-year period, the following factors have influenced this increase in revenue:

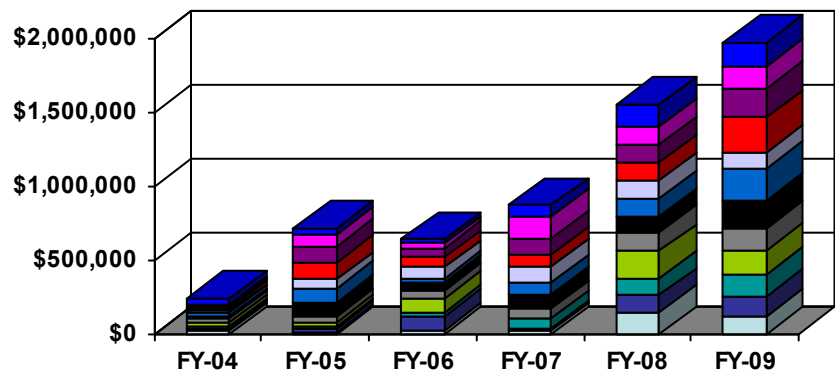
- National Medicare Billing allowances have increased, which allows the City and surrounding jurisdictions to bill more accurately for the services that are being provided;
- The Fire Department has provided additional training in medical documentation;
- A new ambulance billing contractor has been employed, and the collection rate has increased to approximately 60%;
- A new electronic incident and patient care reporting software is in use, making it easier to document and retrieve information.

EMS providers are now kept up-to-date on data collection and documentation techniques during quarterly continuing education training, which is increasing accuracy and completeness. After documentation is complete, it is forwarded to the ambulance billing company, which begins the billing process to a patient's insurance company. A correlation can be seen by the ambulance billing company between revenue returns and timeliness and accuracy of the documentation on a patient care report--the more accurate the patient care report, the faster the revenue recovery.

Not to be overlooked are the Fire Department's Fiscal Officer, Virginia Lester, and the IT staff. Virginia acts a liaison between the Fire Department and the ambulance-billing contractor; monitors the billing company revenue, and provides follow-up information as needed. The IT staff keeps the reporting system running, monitors the data interfaces for the software, and handles any problems that are brought to their attention.

Great Job—to all in EMS! Your Patient Care Reports are generating revenues to offset almost 30% of the cost of providing EMS service in Alexandria.

Ambulance Transport Revenue (By-Month)



My Life Outside the Fire Department....By John Vollmer



John fishing in Cape Code

I'm saddened to leave the Alexandria Fire Dept, after 23 years of calling these 19 square miles, home. I am really looking forward to doing what I have enjoyed most when I'm not at work. I have hunted in Bath County, VA, during Thanksgiving; fished in Cape Cod; coached my son Colby's baseball team (did I mention they are VA State champi-

ons). I also enjoy watching my daughter Caitlyn play soccer with her classmates.

I've always said "You can never trust a skinny chef", as a fat man, I love to cook & will continue to practice my culinary skills at home. Hopefully I can break down my recipes to feed four people not the 7-10

I'm used to feeding! Last but certainly not least I will be able to spend quality time with my wife Samantha. She has shared me with the Department for the last 14 years, and during my tenure with Local 2141, For that

I'm very thankful. In closing, this Department has been a huge part of my life, that I will look back on fondly.

Fireworks Press Conference



Fairfax T-411 and Alexandria T-203



AFD Chief Thiel, ACFD Chief Schwartz DC Chief Rubin

The Fire and Life Safety Committee of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments held their annual fireworks safety press conference and safety demonstration at the George Washington Masonic Temple. This year the event will be hosted by the Alexandria Fire Department.

The fireworks safety conference and safety demonstration is held annually to emphasize the dangers of improper use of fireworks. This year's demonstration was facilitated by members of the Washington Field office of the ATF, Fairfax Bomb Squad and Montgomery County's Bomb Disposal Unit. A quarter stick of dynamite, an M-80, and a bottle rocket was detonated to show the dangers of illegal fireworks.

Fire Departments from the Washington Capital Region were represented at this event.



Illegal fireworks



Quarter stick of dynamite vaporizing a watermelon



Bottle rocket hitting a suspended watermelon



Frozen chicken vaporized by an M-80

Awards and Recognition

Promoted to Captain



Wayne Brayant



Sam Good



Chris Kunkle



Sam Parker

Promoted to Communications Supervisor



Jeff Vallimont



Tony Washington



Jason Wehmeyer



Christine Ponce

RETIREMENTS

Frank Ward



John Vollmer 23 Years of service

STATISTICS

FIRE ALARM HEADQUARTERS CALLS PROCESSED	
911	1111
Administration Received	5620
Administration Dialed	2383
Dispatched Calls	1599
Total calls	9220

June Run Stats

	Unit	EMS	SUP	TOTAL	Current Yr	Previous Yr
Station 201	E201	46	72	118	713	1,422
Total		46	72	118	713	1,422
Station 202	E202	48	77	125	709	1,357
	M202	178	30	208	1,114	2,205
Total		226	107	333	1,823	3,562
Station 203	E203	56	79	135	624	1,265
	T203	9	77	86	500	954
Total		65	156	221	1,124	2,219
Station 204	E204	37	70	107	648	1,319
	T204	16	100	116	728	1,389
Total		53	170	223	1,376	2,708
Station 205	E205	73	113	186	1,090	2,127
	M205	220	66	286	1,535	2,857
Total		293	179	472	2,625	4,984
Station 206	E206	88	98	186	1,080	1,974
	M206	209	42	251	1,463	2,806
	R206	15	24	39	234	535
Total		312	164	476	2,777	5,315
Station 207	E207	88	108	196	1,106	2,230
	M207	175	29	204	1,267	2,469
Total		263	137	400	2,373	4,699
Station 208	E208	114	126	240	1,476	2,828
	M208	206	55	261	1,481	2,877
	T208	20	98	118	704	1,366
Total		340	279	619	3,661	7,071
Station totals		1,598	1,264	2,862	16,477	31,980

HOT SHOTS

